

# The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY  
THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

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## THE CHEERFUL LETTER.

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### CONTENTS OF NO. 3.

|                                                     |    |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----|
| THE PARTING HERE: THE GREETING THERE . . .          | 37 |
| CONSOLATION . . . . .                               | 37 |
| THE STILL HOUR . . . . .                            | 38 |
| THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB . . . . .                | 39 |
| THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL: TEACHING ARITHMETIC . . . . . | 40 |
| NATURAL HISTORY . . . . .                           | 43 |
| BIOGRAPHY: FRANCES POWER COBBE . . . . .            | 44 |
| A SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSON . . . . .                    | 46 |
| THE AMUSEMENT COLUMN . . . . .                      | 47 |
| IMPORTANT NOTICES . . . . .                         | 48 |

### THE PARTING HERE: THE GREET- ING THERE.

God giveth quietness at last!  
The common way once more is passed.  
From pleading tears and lingerings fond  
To fuller life and love beyond.

Fold the rapt soul in your embrace,  
Dear ones, familiar with the place!  
While to the gentle greetings there  
We answer here with murmured prayer.

What to shut eyes hath God revealed?  
What hear the ears that death has sealed?  
What undreamed beauty passing show  
Requites the loss of all we know?

O silent land to which we move,  
Enough if there alone be love!  
And mortal need can ne'er outgrow  
What it is waiting to bestow!

O pure soul! from that far-off shore  
Float some sweet song the waters o'er;  
Our faith confirm, our fears dispel,  
With the dear voice we loved so well!

—*John G. Whittier.*

### CONSOLATION.

To touch a fresh wound requires a skilled  
and delicate hand. Often, in trying to heal  
or bind up, we may inflict exquisite pain.  
Each sorrow is individual, unlike any other.  
It has to do with the secrets of being. It is

bound up with thousands of hidden strings  
that cross and recross and interknit, and each  
one is a nerve of pain or a thrill of memory.

But the attempt to console or to speak  
peace cannot be foregone. The effort is es-  
sential to prove that we are human, even if  
it be manifested in but a single tear or hand  
pressure. We, too, have suffered, throbbed,  
ached with our kind in the great tragedy of  
nature which, first written on bleeding hearts,  
is translated on scarred faces and bowed  
forms, in halting steps and hanging hands.  
We, too, are bound up in the great bundle  
of sorrow, pain, and loss, and can only make  
our sign to the fresh mourner that we know  
and understand, and, if we have little or no  
balm to offer, are still in the same boat, on  
the same stormy seas, and have suffered like  
shipwreck.

Our view of death alters, like all other  
views. In youth it is far off, a mystic possi-  
bility: in age it comes nearer, but still is not  
realized. At moments it is dreaded, at other  
moments is an indifferent fact, at others still  
is even prayed for. At times it scarcely  
seems a mystery, so thin the cloud has grown  
upon the horizon. We seem to see into it and  
through it, and to discover that it is only a  
large extension of sleep,—the simple fact  
that we do not wake up in this world, but in  
another. Then in this mood of assertive  
hope, this almost certainty, we seem to know  
why our attempts at consolation look so poor  
and ineffective. All the time we are trying  
to console, a voice is speaking in us, saying  
there is little or nothing to grieve over, that  
we should involuntarily smile if we knew how  
well it is with those who seem to have ceased  
to exist, and yet in spite of appearances have  
entered into a fulness of life of which we have  
no conception.

This strange mood runs on alongside the  
black line of death and oblivion, like the  
silvery current in the Rhone beside its dark  
blue waters that will not blend or mingle.  
We see both sides of this strange thing we  
call death; and, while our eyes are full of  
tears of pity, something is always whispering  
that it is well, more than well with the dead.  
We look into their calm, still faces, where  
the traces of the earth-struggle, the long  
agonies, perhaps, has been smoothed away by

invisible fingers; and a peace, a quietude, a hush, steals in we cannot define.

Before that marble rest, how poor are our little attempts to speak! The great fact is there; but it is not frightful, it is sublime. Nature has taken the face so pain-marred and disease-formed, and made it a thing of mystic beauty. So the thought of escape is always with us before the dead. They have got away, they have left the body's chrysalis without a tenant. The door was left open, and they glided out and got away. It is only when we begin to speculate that we begin to doubt. Before the presence there is something tremendously triumphant, a sense of victory, of having won the fight. The evil of this world has done its worst, but it could not conquer. How joyful seems the sense of getting away from all that cumbered and hindered! We sometimes share that joy openly. We say how glad we are that they did not linger long, that the struggle was soon over.

The healing that comes after the loss inflicted by death is no less significant. It comes not from any process of thought, but it floods in like the spring. We go to bed some night sad and unreconciled: we awake in the morning and find the world altered. There have been gentle touches, soft ministrations, the secret dropping of balm, the consciousness that it is well, so well with those who have left us. Their fulness of life and new experience impinge upon ours. We can rejoice with them again; and, strange to say, we need not suffer for or with them. They stand above suffering now. It is good to know that they have passed through to the other side, that they need not do it over again. The means of happiness must be so much greater there where they are. Their education and development must go on under such beautiful conditions. How the lives must expand! how the blighted must rear their heads again, and begin to grow!

So the great wave of comfort comes, and helps us to bear the sense of loss. It beautifies and dignifies existence. We have interests in two worlds. The cloud is no longer black, but silver-gray. We open our souls to the subtle healing power of nature. The tenderness of those who are left to us is intensified by the new secret we seem to hold from God. We cannot impart it. It is too good for others to believe. It is an intuition. When doubt breathes on it, we are pained as by a profanation of things holy. Readily would we impart our faith if we could, would let the world know that we have not let go our hold on our dear ones, that they are still ours. But how put it into words? The at-

tempt would be a failure. No, we think much, but say little.

This tender, consoling conviction has made the race believe sturdily in immortality. Philosophers have tried to discover the origin of the faith; but, if we read our own hearts, perhaps we shall learn how it arose in primitive man, above all in the primitive mother of the race.

The dead are restored, made to live in the secret places of the heart. They take on a new order of existence in our homes, though seldom spoken of, still always present. We do not let them go, we enshrine them. Do they think of us? Who can doubt it? Are they sometimes near us? Do we not feel them? Have we not an instinct of their presence? So distinctions and dividing lines melt spheres, run together, and blend. The universe becomes permeable to thought. Love is a vital essence. We are made citizens of all worlds. There is the great unity of endless life, and God present everywhere.  
—*The Christian Register.*

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### THE STILL HOUR.

My Father, as thou wilt!  
Oh, may thy will be mine!  
Into thy hand of love  
I would my all resign.  
Through sorrow or through joy  
Conduct me as thine own,  
And help me still to say,  
Father, thy will be done.

My Father, as thou wilt!  
All shall be well for me;  
Each changing future scene,  
I gladly trust with thee.  
Straight to my home above,  
I travel calmly on,  
And sing in life or death  
Father, thy will be done.  
—*From the German of B. Schmolke.*

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Whatever our darkness, God is in it; and through faith in him, if we have not light at once, we have peace.—*William Mountford.*

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Yes, things are hard sometimes. And we must live on and bear God's will. Because he makes a plan for us and there will be always something coming, we can't tell, day by day, what may be. Only he never forgets us or leaves anything out.—*A. D. T. Whitney.*

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"There are three things," says the apostle, "which resist decay, change, and death." These are faith, hope, and love. Faith,—trust in the infinite goodness,—this is the



permanent support which holds us up amid all grief and loss. Hope, that all are journeying to a higher good, that progress is the law of the universe. And love, the love of human hearts, which binds them to each other and to God. This is not given for time and earth only. Pure love, generous friendship, is as unchanging and as permanent as God himself. The love of parent and child, brother and sister, husband and wife, friend and fellow-worker,—this is a permanent chain which binds us to each other in time and eternity. The love which continues in our hearts for those who have left us long years ago is itself the assurance that we belong to each other still. They are ours, and we are theirs, no matter where they are, into what they may have grown up: they are our angels, our blessed friends and helpers. This is only a broader application of the prayer of Jesus, —“Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, may be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me, . . . that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

“Here let me pause, my quest forego;  
Enough for me to feel and know  
That he, in whom the cause and end,  
The past and future, meet and blend,—  
Who girt with his immensities,  
Our vast and star-hung system sees,—  
Moves not alone the heavenly choirs,  
But waves the spring-time’s grassy spires;  
Guards not archangel feet alone,  
But deigns to guide and keep my own;  
Speaks not alone the words of fate  
Which worlds destroy and worlds create,  
But whispers in my spirit’s ear  
A language none beside can hear.  
To Him, from wanderings long and wild,  
I come, an over-wearied child,  
In cool and shade his peace to find,  
Like dew-fall settling on my mind,  
Assured that all I know is best,  
And humbly trusting for the rest.  
I turn from books and creeds apart  
To the still witness in my heart,  
With reverence waiting to behold  
The Eternal Beauty, new and old.”  
—“Communities Above,” James Freeman  
Clarke.

When he shall appear, we shall be like him. In this, the human spirit rests: there is nothing greater. And what he, the first-born brother, is, that shall we also be. If, then, he will reveal himself to me in his whole glory, will he not enter me as the unbroken sunshine, and make me wholly light, as he is? And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.—*Tholuck.*

## THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[Send all offers and requests for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 80 Goffe Street, Quincy, Mass.]

Please remember, when you see a request for a book in the Book Club, to write a card to Mrs. Nichols, asking, “*Shall I send such a book to such a person?*” before sending it, else the person who requests it may receive several copies. When any one writes directly to you, asking for a book offered by you, send a card to Mrs. Nichols, saying that you *have* sent it. When you receive more requests than you can meet, send these to the Book Club to be printed there.

## OFFERS.

Miss Margaret Morse, Amherst, Mass., offers the following books: In French, Corneille, “*Le Cid*,” “*Polyeucte*,” “*Horace*”; Molière, “*Les Jeunes Savantes*,” “*Le Tartuffe*,” “*Les Précieuses Ridicules*”; Racine, “*Andromaque*,” “*Britannicus*,” “*Athalie*”; Greek, “*First Greek Book*,” “*Greek Composition*,” “*Greek Grammar*,” Xenophon’s “*Anabasis*,” Xenophon’s “*Memorabilia*”; Latin, “*Beginner’s Latin*,” “*Prose Composition*,” Cicero, Virgil, Livy, Horace (“*Odes and Epodes*”), Catullus, Terence; Franklin “*Arithmetic*”; School Algebras; College Algebras; “*Trigonometry, Plane and Spherical*”; “*Julius Cæsar*.”

Mrs. N. L. Morse, 9 Whittemore Street, West Roxbury, Mass., offers the following: “*Instruction in Latin*,” Allen and Greenough; “*Introductory Latin*,” Harkness; “*Primary French Translation Book*,” Lyon and De Larpent; “*German Primer*,” Comfort’s; “*Object-lessons for Primary Schools*,” (Ricks’s “*Primary*”); “*Object-lessons for Grammar Schools*” (grammar); “*Practical Lessons in the Use of English*,” Hyde; “*Homœopathic Domestic Medicine*”; “*Going Abroad*” (some advice); “*Official Report of the Thirteenth Universal Peace Congress*”; “*The Teaching of History*” (with reference to War and Peace); “*Language Exercises*,” Metcalf; “*Our Bodies and How We Live*,” Blaisdell; “*Geometry for Grammar Schools*,” Hunt; “*Seaside and Wayside*,” Julia McNair Wright; “*Elements of History*,” Shepard; Harper’s “*Fourth Reader*” Holmes’ “*Fourth Reader*”; Sheldon’s “*Fourth Reader*.”

## REQUESTS.

*Those who write to us for the first time must send the name and address of a minister as a reference. Without that the request will not be printed.*

1. Will some one please send current numbers of *Youth’s Companion* and *Ladies’ Home Journal* for my “*Lending Library*.” I will also send the name of my daughter

who recently married and lives on a claim in New Mexico, forty miles from a railroad. She would very much like the *Ladies' Home Journal* or any other good magazines, and any reading sent her will be read by others. Address, Mrs. H. E. Russell, Grady, New Mexico, via Texico. I also want to request reading books, pictures, etc., to be sent to Bessie and Jessie Williams, Mountain View, Oklahoma. They are aged eleven and thirteen years, and are the oldest girls in a family of nine motherless children, five girls and four boys. Their school advantages have been very small indeed, as they live far out from town or school, and are very lonely since their mother died two months ago, leaving them with a two weeks' old babe to care for. Mrs. B. F. Smith, Mountain View, Oklahoma.

2. Miss Alma Appleton, South Brewer, Maine, a shut-in, asks for "Middlemarch," "Old Curiosity Shop," "Far from the Madding Crowd."

3. Mrs. Kate Gray, Stuart, Virginia, a widow with three children, will appreciate any good reading. She particularly desires "The Old Curiosity Shop."

4. Mrs. R. Erbschloe, Goodwater, Iron Co., Missouri, living more than twenty-five miles from a library, and her husband a chronic invalid, with reading his only pastime, will be very grateful for "Felix Holt," "Middlemarch," or any good reading.

5. Mrs. A. D. Trevey, Naola, Virginia, will be thankful for any of Dickens's or Scott's works.

6. My name was sent to you by a dear friend some time ago, asking for reading for myself and children. I have been receiving the *Cheerful Letter* regularly and for about two months all the reading matter we could read, but just now we do not get any. There are several books I would be glad to have for my children: "Line upon Line," "Ten Nights in a Bar-room," "The Story of Betty," "Quicksilver Sue," "The White Cave," "Two Biddicut Boys," "The Swiss Family Robinson," or "Robinson Crusoe." Mrs. Clara Harris, Palestine, Texas, Route 2, Box 37.

(Except of classics, it is a good plan to mention the author, when you know who it is, as it makes it easier to obtain that particular book.)

7. Miss E. Hill of Sanville, Virginia, would be pleased to receive the following books: "Jackson and New Orleans," by Alexander Walker; "Heaven my Father's House," Kimball; "Manners and Social Usages" (by whom?).

8. Miss Bessie Parker, Irving, New York, a cripple and a shut-in, will be very glad to receive "St. Elmo," or any novels.

9. *Dear Cheerful Letter Friends*,—It has been a long time since I asked for any reading matter, but I will ask again. Your gifts have in the past been a great delight to me. I will give a list, any one of which will be very acceptable: a large print Bible; *Ladies' Home Journal*; *St. Nicholas*; "Hubert," Jacob Abbott; *Suburban Country Life*; "A Golden Gossip," by Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney; *Boston Cooking-School Magazine*. Any of Mrs. Whitney's works would be acceptable. Mrs. S. M. Coverdale, Wilmington, Ohio.

10. Helen A. Jones, 181 Elizabeth Street, Utica, New York, asks for "Felix Holt" and "Far from the Madding Crowd."

11. Mrs. M. R. Hammill, La Grange, California, will be pleased with any copies of Burr McIntosh.

12. Miss Maud M. Tuck, Bumpass, Virginia, sixteen years of age, with six sisters and two brothers younger, thanks those who have remembered her and asks for the *Cheerful Letter* and "The Mill on the Floss."

13. Mrs. Ed. L. Jones, Mannsville, Oklahoma writes, "All reading matter or music will be appreciated."

14. Mrs. Susie M. Turner, Dodson, Virginia, asks for any magazines.

(In writing for magazines, please mention whether it is only *current* numbers that are desired. Some correspondents are glad to receive old magazines.)

#### THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

##### *Learning Arithmetic.—Concluded.*

When you have learned to practice any art in its regular course, while everything goes well, you have only half learned it. That is but the first stage of the work. There is a stage which is quite as important, and which perhaps requires still more effort and attention than the first, and that is to learn how to manage when unexpected



emergencies and difficulties occur. To know how to act while everything goes smoothly and prosperously is one thing; to know what to do when accidents or obstacles occur is another and a very different thing.

Now it is perhaps most usual that, when persons are learning any particular art, or the performance of any operation requiring skill, they learn both easy and the difficult things together; that is, they take them just as they happen to come; as, for instance, when a boy in learning to split logs gets the wedge all imbedded in the wood, or one of the rings off his beetle, does not know what to do, his father teaches him at once what to do in such cases, and so he learns how to conduct the regular work, and how to get out of the difficulties at the same time. Indeed, this is usually the course pursued by teachers while carrying their scholars through long division. They point out to the pupils what the nature of the difficulty is whenever they get into one, and show them on the spot how they are to get out of it. This is indeed often the best way. But Juno was so afraid that Hubert would get again perplexed and entangled, and so stopped in his progress, or, as she expressed it, that he would get off the track again, that she thought it would be best to reserve the difficulties for a separate part of her course. So she had directed Georgie only to let Hubert go on with the work as long as it went smoothly and well, and, as soon as he made any mistakes and became involved in any difficulty, to take the pencil himself and carry the work on beyond the difficulty; and then, when the way was clear, to let Hubert take the pencil and go on again. She would teach him how to deal with the difficulties by and by, she said, taking up one kind of a difficulty at a time.

The first difficulty was when, after multiplying, it appears that the product obtained is larger than the number above it which was divided, so that the subtraction cannot be performed. Juno explained to Hubert that this was because the figure in the quotient was too large, and that to remedy the difficulty he must rub out that figure, make a new one smaller, and then multiply again.

She went on in this way, explaining one after another the various difficulties and entanglements which children usually get into in performing operations in long division when they are not fully familiar with all parts of the process. She took only one of these difficulties at a time,

and, when Hubert came to it in his work, taught him how to get out of it himself, while Georgie or she herself, when he came to any *other* difficulty, went over it for him. In this way, after a reasonable time, he had learned the process quite well, and in learning it had experienced nothing but satisfaction and pleasure.

I have explained thus fully the course which Juno pursued in raising Hubert out of his difficulties in arithmetic, and getting him well under way again, in hopes that, if among the older boys and girls who may read his book there are any who have younger brothers and sisters who are in substantially the same condition that Hubert was in,—perplexed, discouraged, and unhappy,—they may try Juno's experiment upon them; at least so far as to attempt to help them out of their troubles, if not precisely in the same way, at least on the same principles. If they do make such an attempt and should succeed in it, I am sure that it will be a source of great satisfaction and pleasure to *them*, as well as of relief and comfort to the children whom they aid.

After Hubert had learned to do long division well, Juno gave him one example long enough to fill the whole slate, and when it was done, and Hubert had brought it to her, as he did, with a countenance expressive of great satisfaction, and she had looked at it and found it all right, she asked him how he would like to take the slate home, and show his work to his aunt, Mrs. Wood.

"Your aunt will be much gratified," Juno said, "to see how well you are getting on."

But immediately, on hearing this proposal, Hubert's countenance fell.

"Wouldn't you like to do it?" asked Juno. "Don't you think it would please her?"

Hubert shook his head, and said, "I don't think anything would please her. She would look over the whole sum and be sure to find something that was not right, and that she could find fault with."

"Very well," said Juno, "you can do just as you think best. I think you have the work very well, and that there is no occasion to find fault with it on any account."

So Hubert went away with his slate and wiped out his sum as quick as he could with his sponge, for fear that Juno might alter her mind, and think that after all it was best for him to go and show his work to Mrs. Wood.

I presume that Hubert was right in his

idea of what his aunt would have said and thought about his work. She would have examined it very critically, no doubt. Indeed, the better the work was done the more critically she would have examined it, and the more carefully she would have pointed out all the faults that she could find. She would have done this, moreover, from the very best of motives; namely, from a desire to keep up Hubert's standard of accuracy and precision to the highest point, and to stimulate him to greater effort in pressing on toward perfection.

When at length Hubert had learned to solve the problems in long division, which Juno set for him on the slate, with some good degree of correctness and certainty, she allowed him to take his book of arithmetic and attempt to solve those which were given there. Of course, the first of those which were put down in the book were shorter and easier than many that he had already done. He was agreeably pleased to see how easily he could "do these sums," and became so much interested in the work that he wished to take the slate and arithmetic home, and do some of them there. Juno consented to this, so far as to allow him to try four of them at home. But he musn't, on any account, attempt more than four.

So Hubert took his book and his slate home, and that afternoon he went up into his room and began his work upon the four examples given. He remained there at his work for half an hour. At length, his aunt, not hearing his voice about the house or yard, began to wonder where he was. She asked Maria, but Maria said she did not know where he was.

A few minutes afterward Mrs. Wood called to Maria again, saying: "I wish you would look about and find Hubert. I don't think he would go away without asking my permission, and, if he has gone away, he must be in some mischief. Children are almost always in mischief when they are still."

"Maria came back a few minutes afterward, and said that Hubert was up in his room ciphering."

"Ciphering!" repeated Mrs. Wood, in a tone expressive of surprise and incredulity. "That's nonsense! I hope you were not so simple as to suppose that he really was ciphering."

"He *seemed* to be ciphering," said Maria. "He had his slate and his arithmetic book."

Mrs. Wood shook her head. "It is only some artfulness of his," said she.

"He is in some mischief, you may depend and his ciphering is only a pretence,—something to take up when he hears somebody coming. He has got some book that he is reading by stealth, I have no doubt, and, when he heard you coming upstairs, he hid it away. Or he may have secretly procured something to eat which he ought not to have. Go up again and see if you cannot find out the truth, and, if you cannot, bring Hubert to me."

So Maria went away, and in a few minutes returned bringing Hubert with her.

"Hubert, my dear!" said Mrs. Wood, "what are you doing up in your room?"

"I'm doing some sums," said Hubert.

"Ah, Hubert!" said Mrs. Wood, "I'm afraid you're trying to deceive me. It is a very wicked thing to practice deception. It cannot be possible that you are at work upon arithmetic, in your room, for pleasure. Think how many times you have told me that you hated arithmetic."

"Not Juno's kind," said Hubert.

"Juno's kind!" repeated his aunt. "What do you mean by Juno's kind? Let me go and see."

So she laid down her work and went up to Hubert's room, confidently expecting to find some forbidden book, or something or other, that was contraband, hidden in some drawer or other place of concealment. She made a thorough search,—looked into all the drawers, and even under the pillow of the bed,—but nothing was to be found. At last she looked at the slate, and found to her surprise one side full and the other half full of "sums," all evidently in Hubert's hand; and the last one was half finished.

She looked at this work a few minutes in silence, running her eye along the line as if she were trying to find some mistakes.

"Did Juno say you must do this work?" she asked.

"No, aunt," he said. "I am doing them myself. I like to do it."

"You don't make very good sixes," said his aunt, still looking at the work upon the slate, and apparently not noticing Hubert's reply, "nor sevens. You must try to make all your figures carefully and well. It is very important to make all your figures correctly from the first; for, if you make them badly, you get into bad habits which you afterward have all to unlearn."

That evening Mrs. Wood told her husband, Hubert's uncle, that she really believed that Juno had succeeded in making Hubert like arithmetic.



"I should not have believed it possible," said she. "There was nothing that he seemed to hate so intensely. She has almost worked a miracle. Indeed, if she had lived two hundred years ago, and were not so young and good-looking, I don't know but that she would have been in danger of being burnt for a witch."

She laughed at this joke, but then in a moment resumed her serious air, and added:

"However, I would not tell her so for the world. It would make her vain. But I think she is really quite a nice person, and deserves encouragement. I intend to go and see her school some day. I shall be able to give her some advice about managing young persons, which will be of service to her."—"Hubert," Jacob Abbott.

### NATURAL HISTORY.

#### OUR PARROT—A TRUE STORY.

While men are sometimes in danger of forgetting that they are not animals, a few animals and birds show an inclination to become as much as possible like men.

The household pet soon adapts itself to the ways of the family. A cat will rattle the latch of a door in her attempt to open it. Puss has even tried to open a window, that she might have a broad sill on which to lie while she enjoys the sunshine and looks out upon the street. A cat of much intelligence ran quickly to her mistress, pulling at her skirts and crying in distress. By her actions the lady knew that there was trouble in the kitchen, and, hastening out, found that a kerosene lamp had fallen to the floor, and the oil was in flames. The blaze was a slight one, and soon extinguished. But for the cat the house might have been burned.

In our family we have had many pets. The last, and the strangest, is a Brazilian parrot. Perhaps his name had been Maximilian. At all events, he came to us as Mack, and he would not answer to any other name. He came to us five or six years ago, because the new baby, Celia, must not be awakened by Mack's shrieks; for he can shriek when he demands attention. Aunt Lu gives him devoted care. A clean cage, plenty of sunflower seeds and hemp, and fresh water are daily supplied. But, in Mack's opinion, all this is of secondary importance, compared with friendly intercourse with the family.

One evening we were going to the dining-room, at the tea-hour, when Mack softly asked:—

"May I come in?"

"Yes, if you would like to," was the reply.

"Do you *want* me?" asked Mack, seriously.

The cage was placed in a large chair, near the table. With much interest he watched the disappearance of bread, butter, and dry toast. Soon came the question:—

"Do you like it?" which in parrot etiquette, means, "I would like some, please!"

At one time baked beans were served. When Mack saw them, he said, "I don't eat!" Then, mounting upon his seed-cup, in order to get a better view of the dishes, he stretched his neck, and, looking across the table, asked, "Is that apple sauce?"

One day I was carving a roast, when he asked the familiar question, "Do you like it?" to which I answered in the affirmative. Then came the inquiry:—

"Do you like it a *great* many?" which of course was parrot for *very* much.

When nuts are on the table, he waits patiently for what he calls a "cracker." He knows that nuts must be cracked, and he loves to crack them with his strong beak.

No wonder that he likes nuts! Is he not from Brazil—"where the nuts come from"?

When he first saw a chocolate caramel, he retreated to the farther end of his perch, as if a little afraid of this new, dark object. But his curiosity was awakened; and, approaching the caramel gently, he touched it with his round black tongue, exclaiming, "I *do* like it!"

Mack is very fond of rich colors, especially in dress. In our simple home garments he finds little to admire, but notices every little change of attire. In a new gray suit I went to speak to him before leaving the house. He looked at me critically, but without favor. I asked, "How do you like it, Mack?"

Turning his head on one side, like an artist criticising his own work, he surveyed me from head to foot; and, as he never tells the least untruth, and yet is strictly polite, he was puzzled. However, he gave utterance to a sound which plainly meant, "Well, it will *do*!"

On returning from my walk, Mack called out, in a hearty tone, "Hello!"

Evidently he had repented of his coolness, and was trying to make amends. Expressing much pleasure at my return, he stretched his gray-gloved "hand" through the cage wires, as if to say, "Shake hands, and make up!"

Again he surveyed me, but with a favorable air, exclaiming: "Oh! Oh!!—Yes! Yes!"

His love of rich colors was distinctly shown when a lady came to my studio, and stayed to luncheon with the family. She was sitting for a portrait, and wore a green

velvet waist, with soft creamy lace hanging from the neck. As Mack is very fond of what he calls "gompany," he was allowed to come into the dining-room.

As soon as he saw the beautiful waist, he was wild with delight. He uttered cries of joy, and stretched his "hand" through the wires of his cage, that he might offer congratulations in his usual way. Failing to meet an extended hand, he burst into a ripple of melody, singing eloquently, every feather on his head and neck stretched outward to the utmost. His eyes were large and lustrous. When excited, his voice is seldom musical, his enthusiasm carrying him beyond all bounds. The few words that he sings have a foreign sound, as if inherited from some Brazilian ancestor.

—*Helen M. Knowlton, in Christian Register.*

#### FRANCES POWER COBBE.

(Continued.)

But outside my father's property, when we passed into the next villages on either side, Swords or Rush or Balisk, the state of things was bad enough.

Balisk was certainly *not* the "loveliest village of the plain." Situated partly on the edge of an old common, partly on the skirts of the domain of a nobleman who had not visited his estate for thirty years, it enjoyed all the advantages of freedom from restraint upon the architectural genius of its builders. The result was a long, crooked, straggling street, with mud cabins turned to it, and from it, in every possible angle of incidence, some face to face, some back to back, some sideways, some a little retired so as to admit of a larger than ordinary heap of manure between the door and the road. The cabins were all of mud, with mud floors and thatched roofs, some containing one room only, others two, and perhaps half a dozen, three rooms, all, very literally, on the ground; that is, on the bare earth. Furniture, of course, was of the usual Irish description: a bed (sometimes having a bedstead, oftener consisting of a heap of straw on the floor), a table, a griddle, a kettle, a stool or two, and a boss of straw, with occasionally the grand adjunct of a settle; a window whose normal condition was being stuffed with an old hat; a door, over and under and around which all the winds and rains of heaven found their way; a population consisting of six small children, a bed-ridden grandmother, a husband and wife, a cock and three hens, a pig, a dog, and a cat. Lastly, a decoration of colored prints, in-

cluding the virgin with seven swords in her heart, Saint Joseph, the story of Dives and Lazarus, and a caricature of a man tossed by a bull, and a fat woman getting over a stile.

Of course, as Balisk lies in the lowest ground in the neighborhood and the drains were originally planned to run "at their own sweet will," the town (as its inhabitants call it) is subject to the inconvenience of being about two feet under water whenever there are any considerable floods of rain. At other times, when there were no floods, only the usual rains, Balisk presented the spectacle of a filthy green stream slowly oozing down the central street, now and then draining off under the door of any particularly lowly placed cabin to form a pool in the floor, and finally terminating in a lake of stagnant abomination under the viaduct of a railway. Yes, reader! a railway ran through Balisk, even while the description I have given of it held true in every respect. The only result it seemed to have effected in the village was the formation of the Stygian pool above mentioned, where heretofore the stream had escaped into a ditch.

Let us now consider the people who dwelt amid all this squalor. They were mostly field-laborers, working for the usual wages of seven or eight shillings a week. Many of them held their cabins as freeholds, having built or inherited them from those who had "squatted" unmolested on the common. A few paid rent to the noble landlord before mentioned. Work was seldom wanting, coals were cheap, excellent schools were open for the children at a penny a week a head. Families which had not more than three or four mouths to fill, besides the breadwinners', were not in absolute want, save when disease, or a heavy snow, or a flood, or some similar calamity arrived. Then, down on the ground, poor souls! literally and metaphorically, they could fall no lower, and a week was enough to bring them to the verge of starvation.

Let me try to recall some of the characters of the inhabitants of Balisk in the forties.

Here in the first cabin is a comfortable family, where there are three sons at work, and mother and three daughters at home. Enter at any hour, there is a hearty welcome and a bright jest ready. Here is the schoolmaster's house, a little behind the others and back to back with them. It has an attempt at a curtain for the window, a knocker for the door. The man is a curious deformed creature, of whom more will be said hereafter. The wife is what is called in Ireland a "Voteen," a person given to re-



ligion, who spends most of her time in the chapel or repeating prayers, and who wears as much semblance of black as her poor means may allow. Balisk, be it said, is altogether Catholic and devout. It is honored by the possession of what is called "The Holy Griddle." Perhaps my readers have heard of the Holy Grail, the original sacramental chalice so long sought by the chivalry of the Middle Ages, and may ask if the Holy Griddle is akin thereto? I cannot trace any likeness. Years ago, probably in the last century, a poor "lone widow" lay on her deathbed. She had none to pray for her after she was gone, for she was childless and altogether desolate; neither had she any money to give to the priest to pray for her soul. Yet the terrors of purgatory were near. How should she escape them? She possessed but one object of any value,—a griddle, whereon she was wont to bake the meal of the wheat she gleaned every harvest to help her through the winter. So the widow left her griddle as a legacy to the village forever, on one condition. It was to pass from hand to hand as each might want it, but every one who used her griddle was to say a prayer for her soul. Years had passed away, but the griddle was still, in my time, in constant use, as "the best griddle in the town." The cakes baked on the Holy Griddle were twice as good as any others. May the poor widow who so simply bequeathed it have found long ago "rest for her soul" better than any prayers have asked for her, even the favorite Irish prayer, "May you sit in heaven on a golden chair"!

Here is another house, where an old man lives with his sister. The old woman is the Mrs. Gamp of Balisk. Patrick Russell has a curious story attached to him. Having labored long and well on my father's estate, the latter, finding him grown rheumatic and helpless, pensioned him with his wages for life, and Paddy retired to the enjoyment of such privacy as Balisk might afford. Growing more and more helpless, he at last for some years hobbled about feebly on crutches, a confirmed cripple. One day, with amazement, I saw him walking without his crutches and tolerably firmly up to New-bridge House. My father went to speak to him, and soon returned, saying: "Here is a strange thing. Paddy Russell says he has been to Father Mathew, and Father Mathew has blessed him, and he is cured! He came to tell me he wished to give up his pension, since he returns to work at Smith's farm next week." Very naturally, and as might be expected, poor Paddy, three weeks later, was again helpless, and a suppliant for the

restoration of his pension, which was of course immediately renewed. But one who had witnessed only the scene of the long-known cripple walking up stoutly to decline his pension (the very best possible proof of his sincere belief in his own recovery) might well be excused for narrating the story as a miracle wrought by a true moral reformer, the Irish "Apostle of Temperance."

Next door to Paddy Russell's cabin stood "The Shop," a cabin a trifle better than the rest, where butter, flour, and dip candles, Ingy-male (Indian meal), and possibly a small quantity of soap, were the chief objects of commerce. Further on came a miserable hovel, with the roof broken in and a pool of filth, *en permanence*, in the middle of the floor. Here dwelt a miserable, good-for-nothing old man and equally good-for-nothing daughter, hopeless recipients of anybody's bounty. Opposite them, in a tidy little cabin, always as clean as white-wash and sweeping could make its poor mud walls and earthen floor, lived an old woman and her daughter. The daughter was deformed, the mother a beautiful old woman, bed-ridden, but always perfectly clean, and provided, by her daughter's hard labor in the fields and cockle-gathering on the seashore, with all she could need. After years of devotion, when Mary was no longer young, the mother died, and the daughter, left quite alone in the world, was absolutely broken-hearted. Night after night she strayed about the chapel-yard where her mother lay buried, hoping, as she told me, to see her ghost.

"And do you think," she asked, fixing her eyes on me, "do you think I shall ever see her again? I asked Father M. would I see her in heaven? and all he said was, 'I should see her in the glory of God.' What does that mean? I don't understand what it means. Will I see *herself*—my poor old mother?"

After long years I found this faithful heart still yearning to be reunited to the "poor old mother," and patiently laboring on in solitude, waiting till God should call her home out of that little white cabin to one of the "many mansions" where her mother is waiting for her.

Here is a house where there are many sons and daughters and some sort of prosperity. Here, again, is a house with three rooms and several inmates, and in one room lives a strange, tall old man, with something of dignity in his aspect. He asked me once to come into his room, and showed me the book over which all his spare hours were spent,—*"Thomas à Kempis."*

"Ah, yes, that is a great book, a book full of beautiful things."

"Do you know it? Do Protestants read it?"

"Yes, to be sure: we read all sorts of books."

"I'm glad of it. It's a comfort to me to think you read this book."—*Autobiography of Frances Power Cobbe.*

### A SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSON.\*

In our last number we gave (quoting from Jacob Abbott) a specimen of the wrong way to give a lesson to a Sunday-school. In this number we will give an illustration of the right method, learned also from Jacob Abbott. In both cases the *subject* is the same; that is, "Right Motives. Man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart."

Now, in teaching or explaining a spiritual or moral truth to grown-up persons, we first make a statement of the truth—as in the text of a sermon,—and then proceed to illustrate and explain it by examples or arguments. But, in teaching a moral or spiritual truth to children, we begin at the other end. Their attention must first be caught by the illustrations, and *then* the mind gradually led up to the spiritual truth, as in the specimen that follows.

The superintendent begins thus:—

"I am going to tell you a story. There was a teacher who taught a boys' school. One day he called one of the boys up to his desk, and said: 'John, I have a hymn here in this book that I want to have copied. Will you make me a copy? If you will do it as nicely as you can, I will pay you twenty-five cents.'"

John took the hymn to copy, and went back to his desk.

Tell me now, what *motive* did the teacher offer to John, to induce him to copy the hymn?

The boys answer: "Money," "The quarter of a dollar," "Love of Money," etc.

"Yes, love of money, it might be called."

The teacher then called another boy—his name was James—and said: "I want a copy of this hymn, for I need a copy, beside the hymn in the book. Are you willing to do it for me? I have not time, myself."

James was very willing, he was fond of

his teacher who had always been very kind to him.

"What motive did the teacher offer to James?"

"Friendship" perhaps the boys would say or "Kindness," or "Good-nature."

"Yes, we will call it *friendship*. A great many kind acts are done from this motive."

The teacher then called a third boy. His name was George. To him he said:

"I think you write a very good hand. I should like to have you copy this hymn for me. I want to show your copy to the School Committee as a specimen of the best writing that is done in my school. I shall tell them that you are my best scholar in that respect."

George took the hymn-book offered to him, and he took great pains to make a handsome copy.

"What motive for copying the hymn did the teacher give to George?"

"Love of praise," "Vanity," etc., the scholars answer.

"We will call it love of approbation. Phrenologists tell us there is an organ in the head called love of approbation. So we will call it that."

The next boy the teacher spoke to was named Henry. To him he said:—

"Henry, I went to visit a sick boy yesterday, and I read him this hymn. He liked it very much, and I told him I would ask one of the boys to make him a copy as he does not own a hymn-book. I thought one of the boys would be kind enough to do so. Are you willing to do this?"

Henry said that he would be very glad to do it; and he made a very good copy, taking pains to write clearly and carefully.

What motive was offered to Henry?

"Kindness," "Pity," "Generosity," "Benevolence," the boys may say.

The teacher then called up a fifth boy, and said:—

"I have set four boys to work copying this hymn, now I want you to sit down and see whether, by taking great pains, you can do it better than any one else. I will compare the copies after they are finished, and see which is the best."

What motive did the teacher give to this boy?

Perhaps the scholars hardly know what to call it. "Ambition," or "Emulation," or "Liking to get ahead of others," may be the motives suggested. The teacher may say:—

"Emulation is the best word. That means, the desire to excel others."

\* This lesson is taken from an old book by Jacob Abbott called "The Teacher." It is very slightly modified to adapt it to the needs of the Sunday-schools of the present day.



Now, there happened to be in the school a boy named Robert, who unluckily was fond of playing mischievous tricks. One of the boys of whom we have been talking left his seat to go and speak to the teacher. Robert sat near him, and to tease and trouble him he seized the opportunity to scribble on his copy and spoiled it, so that he had to do it all over again. What motive induced him to do this?

"Malice," "Spite," "Mischief," "Love of teasing," the boys may say.

I am afraid we must call it *malice*. That is the feeling that makes a boy like to do what gives pain to others or does them harm.

Six boys were now busy writing. We will suppose them to belong to one class, and to be sitting in one part of the room.

A stranger now came in, and, seeing these boys all looking quiet and diligent, said to the teacher:—

"Those seem to be very industrious, good boys."

"Not quite certainly," answered the teacher. "It is not certain that they are all good boys."

"I mean that they are all good boys *now*: they are diligent and good at *this time*."

"Even that is not certain. Some are doing right, and one at least, wrong, though they are all writing, and *look* exactly alike as to their work and their attention to it."

The visitor looked surprised, and asked what the teacher meant. He answered:

"I admit that their actions are all the same, but in their minds and hearts they are different. They are thinking of different things. One is thinking about earning money: he expects to receive twenty-five cents for his copy. One is doing his best to surpass his schoolmates. One is preparing a pleasure for a sick child: he is thinking kindly and affectionately of the little fellow. And do you see the boy on the back seat? He has maliciously taken another boy's place, just to spoil his work, and he is also breaking the rules of the school by staying out of his own seat."

"Now, I have told you this story to teach you something very important:—

*"Our characters depend not only on what we do, but on the motives and the spirit in our heart with which we do it."*

"There is an important text in the Bible, which I have been trying to explain by this story. Will the boys who have Bibles turn to 1 Samuel xvi. 7.

"James, you may read the verse aloud. Come and stand here, and read it so that all the school may hear."

James read as follows:—

"MAN LOOKETH ON THE OUTWARD APPEARANCE, BUT THE LORD LOOKETH ON THE HEART."

We have given the skeleton of the lesson. It may be improved in various ways. For some children it would be best to divide it into two lessons. More questions may be asked. The different value of the motives may be discussed, and the children asked to suggest other motives. The lesson will be better fixed in their minds by asking them to repeat it to the teacher the next Sunday. These variations will occur to any good teacher.

The important points are:—

*First.* Begin with the illustrations, and end with the text, leading gradually up to the religious or moral truth.

*Second.* Divide the subject into small portions.

*Third.* Keep the children interested by asking questions and giving them a share in the discussion. Encourage them by taking interest in what they say and commending answers.

*Fourth.* Make the lesson short.

L. F. C.

## THE AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

[Address everything relating to the Amusement Column to Mr. Henry A. Jenks, Canton Corner, Mass. Contributors are requested to write on one side of the paper only. Write name and address plainly (not necessarily for publication), and send the answers to the puzzles on a separate slip of paper.]

### I.

#### CROSS WORD ENIGMA.

In joy, but not in class.  
In Harvard, but not in Bowdoin  
In mire, but not in flour.  
Not in lyric, but in Yale  
In salt, but not in kite.  
In kind, but not in Tufts.  
In pig, but not in bear.  
Not in wheat, but in corn.  
In ale, but not in soda.  
In king, but not in queen.  
My whole is one of the Presidents of the United States.

### II.

#### CONUNDRUMS.

12. What is that which we often return, but never borrow?

13. What enlightens the world, though dark itself?

## III.

## PIED RIVERS.

1. Zaamno. 2. Haqssuunane. 3. Mtocnersaa. 4. Karsbane. 5. Netesnese.  
*Harper's Young People.*

## IV.

## A DIAMOND.

A vowel. The finish. To go in. The home of a wild beast. A consonant.—  
*Every Other Sunday.*

## V.

## NUMERICAL PUZZLE.

Famous cities. Each number represents a corresponding letter in the alphabet.

2, 15, 19, 20, 15, 14, a city in Massachusetts.  
13, 15, 19, 3, 15, 23, a city in Russia.  
12, 15, 14, 4, 15, 14, a city in England.  
16, 1, 18, 9, 19, a city of France.  
17, 21, 5, 2, 5, 3, a city in Canada.

*Answers to Puzzles in Number for July and August.*

I. *A Wheel.*—1. Abhor. 2. Allot. 3. Acrid. 4. Aisle. 5. After. 6. Adore. 7. Amend. 8. Arbor.

II. *Pi.*—

Some village Hampden, that with dauntless breast

The little tyrant of his fields withstood,  
Some mute, inglorious Milton here may rest,  
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood.

III. *Conundrums.*—10. A dollar bill, because when you put it in your pocket you double it, and when you take it out, you find it in-crases.

11. He makes people *steal* (steal) pens, and tells them they do *write* (right).

IV. *Hidden Trees.*—1. Aspen. 2. Ash. 3. Maple. 4. Plane. 5. Beech. 6. Fir. 7. Palm. 8. Date. 9. Apple. 10. Orange.

We are obliged to call this number No. 3, finding that it is the law that two numbers of a periodical, condensed, must count as one, although containing a double number of pages.

## IMPORTANT NOTICES.

Hereafter, subscriptions to *The Cheerful Letter* should be sent to the secretary, Mrs. L. B. Porter, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. Make checks payable to Lily Blunt Porter.

Any subscriber not receiving the paper regularly is requested to notify the secretary.

The secretary may be seen at headquarters, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, every Monday, Tuesday, and Friday.

The Cheerful Letter Exchange is developing Home Study work for the benefit of those without school facilities.

Arrangements will be made for lessons by correspondence in any school subject for those who are unable to leave their homes or who are far from centres of education.

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It is contrary to the rules of the Cheerful Letter Exchange to allow any one to make use of our paper by addressing letters, asking for money, clothing, or other articles, to those whose names are printed in the paper. This prohibition includes requests to borrow money and the offering of articles for sale. The name of any person who infringes this rule will be dropped from our list; and any one who receives a request of this description is desired by our Executive Committee to return no answer, but to enclose the letter at once to our secretary, Mrs. L. B. Porter.

Any minister (of any sect) who receives this paper is invited to write to our headquarters (see address on this page) and give names and addresses of those who may be cheered and helped by becoming our correspondents.

No *theology* is disseminated in our paper. All the religious matter is intended merely to strengthen, cheer, and comfort those in need of such practical help.

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